

**FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 6 - 12, 2016.** Report #3

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Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS.

The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report sent by the close of business the following Monday. Web links have been included to provide additional information. You may obtain additional information on a fishery of particular interest by contacting the in-season manager, provided contacts, follow the provided web links, or contact me.

**SOUTHEAST ALASKA****Sitka and Hoonah Area**

**Klag Bay** - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is scheduled to be operational the last week in June. In 2015, approximately 3,304 Sockeye Salmon migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,344 Sockeye Salmon were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

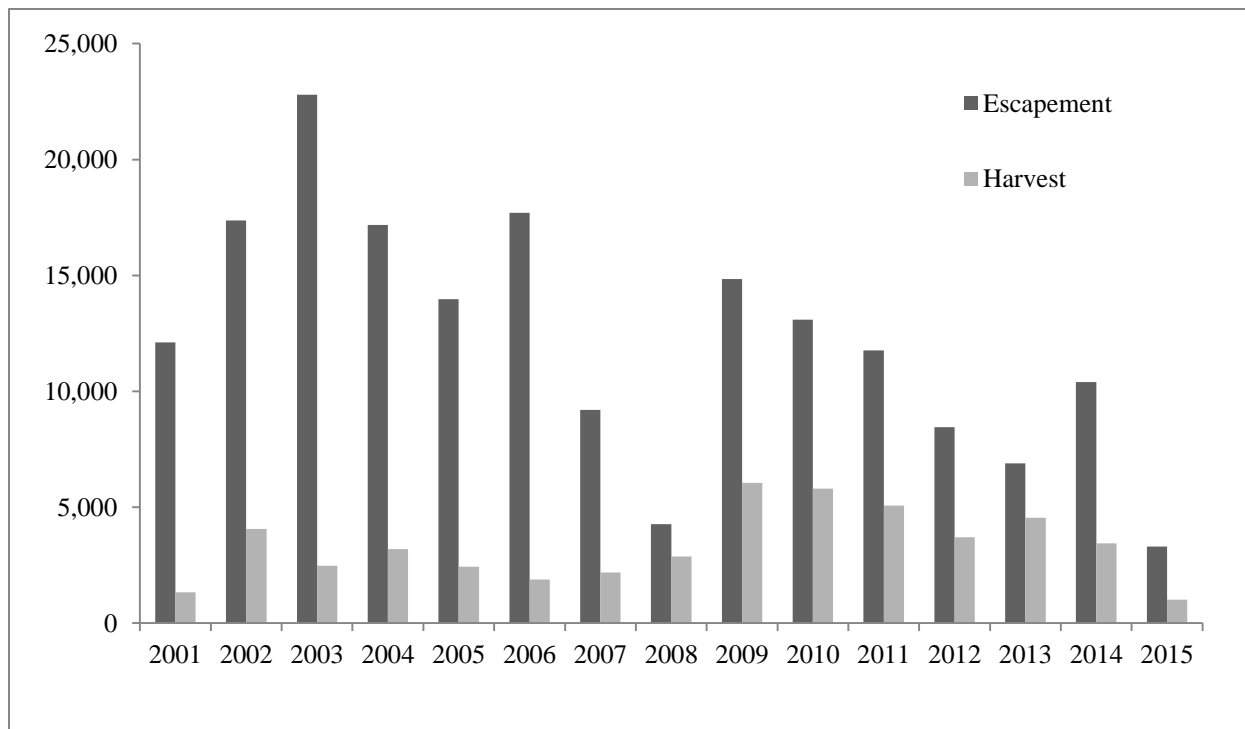


Figure 1. Escapement and harvest of Sockeye Salmon at Klag Bay, 2001-2015 (Sitka Tribe of Alaska).

**Redoubt Lake** - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir and video-equipped net weir which are scheduled to be operational in mid-June. In 2015, an estimated total of 13,379 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. In accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the individual/household subsistence Sockeye Salmon possession limit remained 10 and the individual/household subsistence Sockeye Salmon annual limit remained 50 throughout the season. These limits were based on an in-season model prediction of about 11,500 Sockeye Salmon returning. The preliminary subsistence Sockeye Salmon harvest was 402.

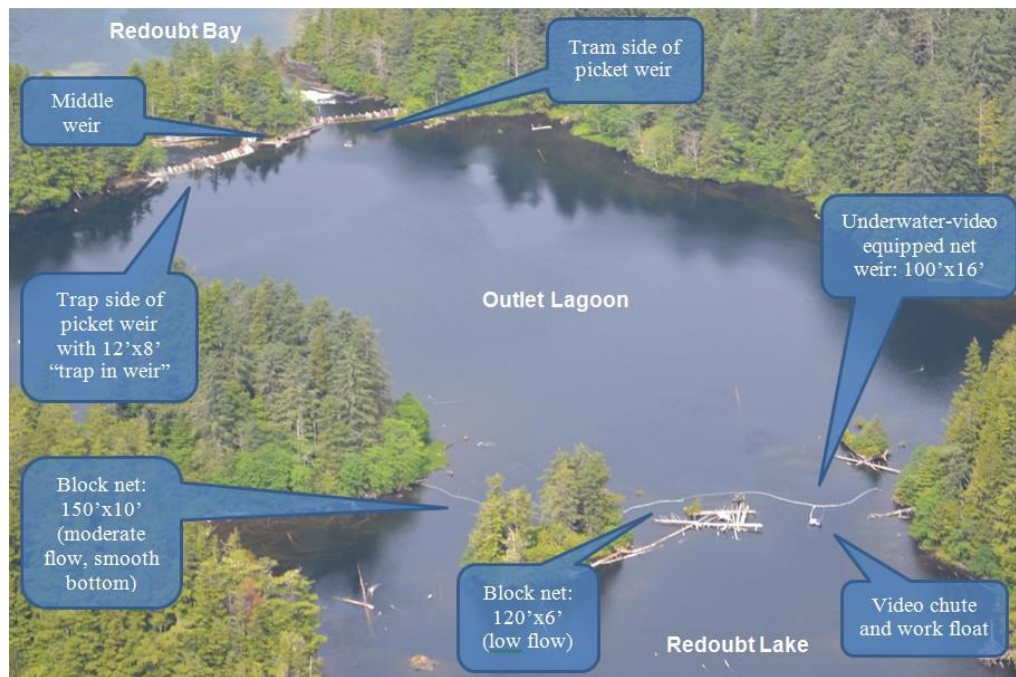


Figure 1. Aerial view (2013) of the outlet lagoon of Redoubt Lake showing the typical locations of the picket weir, net weir and block nets.

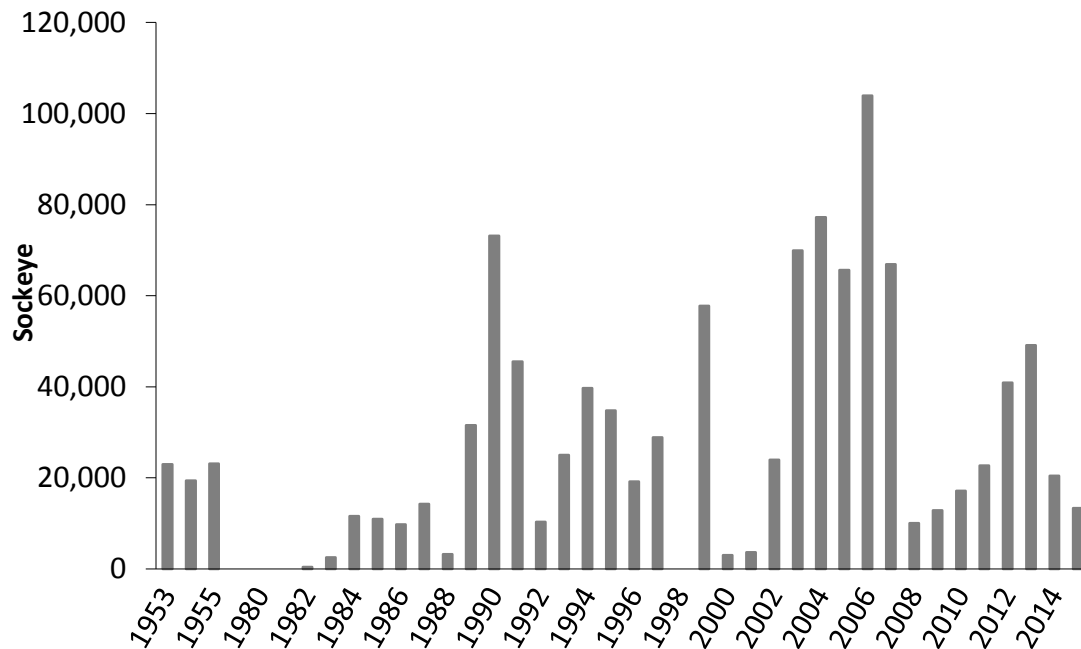


Figure 3. Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2015. The weir was not operated in 1998.

**Falls Lake** - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weirs which will be operational the first week of July. The final escapement estimate in 2015 was 4,716 Sockeye Salmon while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 1,031. Subsistence harvest accounted for 99% of terminal area harvest.

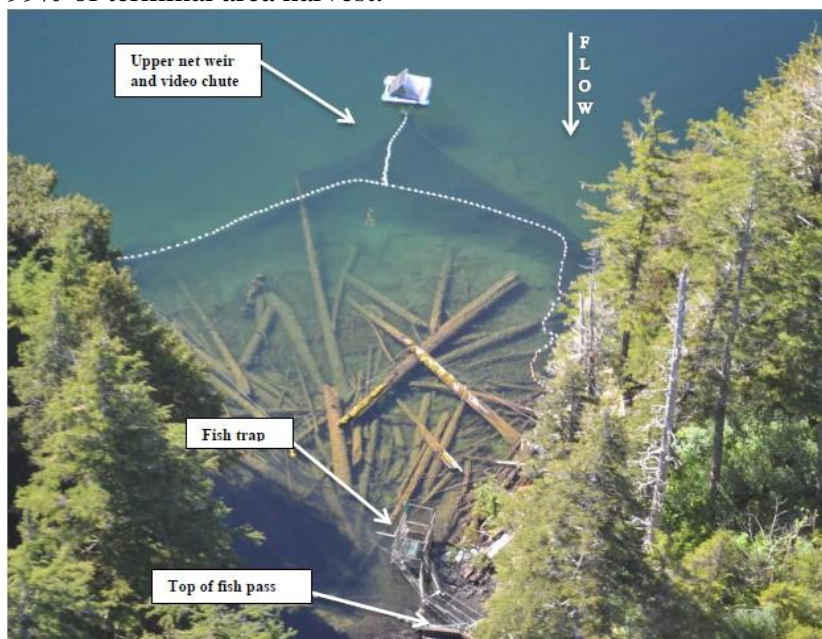


Figure 4. Aerial photo (2013) of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.

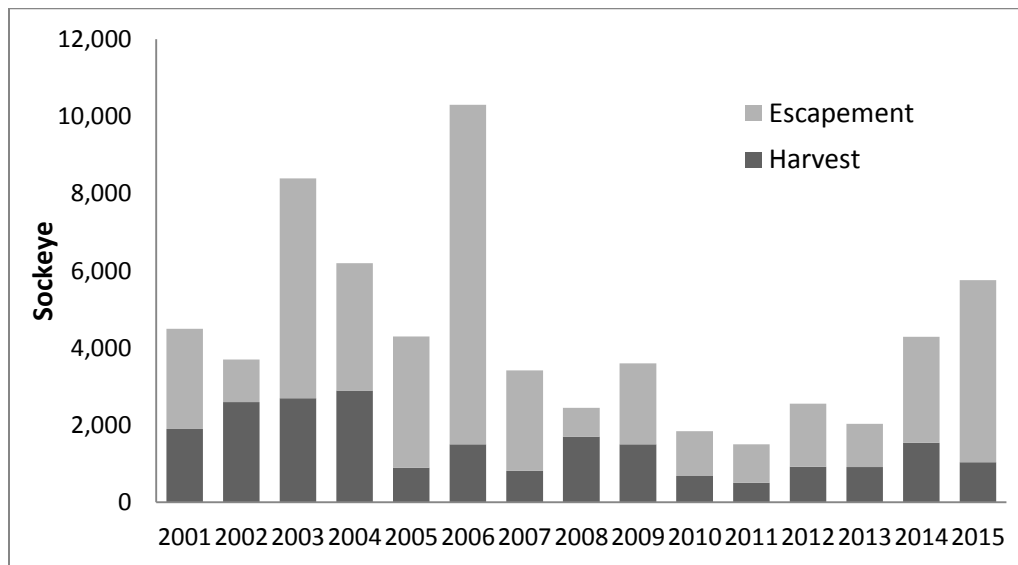


Figure 5. Escapement and harvest (terminal run) of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2015.

### Wrangell/Petersburg Area

#### Wrangell/Petersburg Area for Stat Week 24, ending June 11

There have been 36 permits issued for the Stikine River subsistence salmon fishery. Although river conditions have been good for fishing, effort has been low and the total harvest estimate to date is one Chinook Salmon. Fishers are waiting for Sockeye Salmon to become more abundant prior to participating in the subsistence fishery. The District 6 and 8 Sockeye Salmon fishery opens on Monday, June 13, 2016 with restrictions to protect Chinook Salmon near the mouth of the Stikine River.

### Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area

The 2016 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas has started. To date, 117 permits have been issued.

The 2016 Prince of Wales/Kosciusko spring subsistence steelhead fishery ended on May 31<sup>st</sup>. A total of 63 permits were issued to Prince of Wales Island residents during this fishery. Permits from this fishery are being returned and are not due back until June 15. The total reported harvest to date is 10 Steelhead Trout and 5 Dolly Varden.

With a very high abundance of Chinook Salmon in local marine waters, as well as liberal sport limit, most subsistence users are still actively fishing under sport fishing regulations at this time. Although a couple of Prince of Wales Island streams have June returns of sockeye, most subsistence users are in preparation for subsistence harvest in July.

The Hydaburg Cooperative Association projects at both Hetta Lake and Eek Lake outlets have begun. No escapement estimates have been provided yet. The Klawock Lake project will not begin until July 1.

Commercial seine and drift gillnet fishing in Districts 1-4 will be starting soon. Limited spring season commercial troll opportunity for Chinook is occurring to target Alaska hatchery origin salmon prior to the July 1 summer season. Commercial harvest to date is 5,143 Chinook Salmon from the terminal areas in Districts 1-4.

**Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest**

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**Wrangell/Petersburg Area – Bob Larson, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest**

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**Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Ben Van Alen**

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[jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us](mailto:jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us)), Forest Service, **Tongass National Forest**

**Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area – Jeff Reeves, Forest Service, Tongass**

**National Forest. (907) 826-1649 [jreeves@fs.fed.us](mailto:jreeves@fs.fed.us)**

**Southeast Alaska Web Links**

*Tongass National Forest News Room <http://www.fs.usda.gov/news/tongass/news-events>*

*Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Southeastern Alaska Area  
[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Southeast.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Southeast.pdf)*

*ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order Link  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R1>*

*ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>*

*Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southeast Alaska  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R1.home>*

*Statewide ADF&G Fish counts  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>*

**SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA****PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND – COPPER RIVER****Copper River – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve**

As of June 8, 2016 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 292,668 salmon had migrated upstream for the season. This estimate is 6% more than the projected escapement of 275,715 for this date, or 16,953 more salmon. An estimate of 23,228 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on June 8.

**MILES LAKE SONAR ESTIMATES (TOTAL SALMON)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Estimate</b>
<b>1978</b>	107,011	<b>1988</b>	488,398	<b>1998</b>	866,957	<b>2008</b>	614,999
<b>1979</b>	237,173	<b>1989</b>	607,797	<b>1999</b>	848,921	<b>2009</b>	709,330
<b>1980</b>	276,538	<b>1990</b>	581,895	<b>2000</b>	587,592	<b>2010</b>	924,010
<b>1981</b>	535,263	<b>1991</b>	579,435	<b>2001</b>	833,569	<b>2011</b>	914,285
<b>1982</b>	467,306	<b>1992</b>	601,952	<b>2002</b>	819,000	<b>2012</b>	1,271,354
<b>1983</b>	545,724	<b>1993</b>	797,902	<b>2003</b>	695,233	<b>2013</b>	1,267,060
<b>1984</b>	536,806	<b>1994</b>	715,181	<b>2004</b>	669,646	<b>2014</b>	1,177,005
<b>1985</b>	436,313	<b>1995</b>	599,265	<b>2005</b>	854,268	<b>2015</b>	1,341,545
<b>1986</b>	509,275	<b>1996</b>	906,867	<b>2006</b>	959,731		
<b>1987</b>	483,478	<b>1997</b>	1,148,079	<b>2007</b>	926,438		

The Chitina Subdistrict opened on June 7 and will remain open through June 12. It is then scheduled to reopen immediately on June 13 and remain open the entire week. The state and federal fisheries usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Fifty-six (56) Federal Chitina Subdistrict permits have been issued on the FWS online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity.

The Glennallen Subdistrict opened for Federal subsistence users on May 15<sup>th</sup> and is expected to remain open until September 30<sup>th</sup>. One hundred seventy-nine (179) Federal Glennallen permits have been issued on the FWS online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity. The state subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1.

The Batzulnetas fishery is open. No Federal permits have been issued so far.

The Tanada Creek fish weir was installed last week on June 1. The water level in the creek is extremely low for this time of year; no salmon have yet been observed at the site.

As of June 2, 1,739 Chinook Salmon had been tagged at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak. The upriver fishwheels at Canyon Creek have captured 637 Chinook Salmon, of which, 92 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River began operation on May 27; twelve (12) Chinook Salmon have been counted as of June 8.

One Special Action has been issued by the park this season:

- delaying the starting date of the Chitina River federal subsistence salmon fishery and setting the tentative pre-season schedule for this fishery.

#### Links

ADF&G Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon\\_escapement](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon_escapement)

NVE's Chinook Escapement Monitoring project in the Copper River

<http://eyak.fishscan.com/Summary/DailySummary.aspx>

ADF&G Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.harvestsummary>

Gulkana River counting tower – ADF&G

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.LocSelectYearSpecies>

**PWS and Copper River Delta – Milo Burcham, Chugach National Forest, Cordova.**  
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#### 10 June 2016

A total of 25 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Prince William Sound of Chugach National Forest to date. One-hundred and two permits were issued in 2015. Harvest by this year's permit holders will not be known until reports are returned this winter. In 2015, 878 Coho and 172 Sockeye salmon were reported harvested on Copper River Delta fresh waters in this fishery.

The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, June 9 for a 24-hour commercial fishing period. The Chinook Salmon inside closure area will be CLOSED during this fishing period. A preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that



started on Monday, June 6 was 600 Chinook and 43,800 Sockeye salmon with 530 deliveries reported.

**Cook Inlet Area – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office** (907) 260-0132 [Jeffrey\\_Anderson@fws.gov](mailto:Jeffrey_Anderson@fws.gov)

The 2016 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon will begin on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers June 15 and June 16, respectively. Seasons and areas for subsistence fishing with rod and reel are the same as for the taking of fish under Alaska sport fishing regulations. Most of the initial rod and reel subsistence effort will be focused at Sockeye Salmon in the Upper Kenai and Russian Rivers which opens on June 11. Totals of 63 Kenai River permits, 76 Kasilof River permits, and 4 Designated Fisher permits have been issued through June 11.

The Ninilchik Traditional Council has submitted operational plans for consideration for the Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery and the Kenai River community gillnet fishery. The Kasilof Plan should be finalized soon. The Kenai Plan is still being reviewed.

The early-run of Kenai River Chinook Salmon is coming in above projections, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game opened the sport fishery to catch-and-release fishing on June 4. The Department reports low participation and success in the fishery through June 9. A total of 4,690 Chinook Salmon have been counted at the Department's sonar assessment site at river mile 14 through June 9, which is nearing the lower bound of the optimal escapement goal range (5,300 to 9,000). Through June 12, a total of 1,426 early-run Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Russian River weir, which commenced operations on June 4 this year.

Fish counts at some Department-operated assessment projects are available on-line at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.home>

**Kodiak Island Area – Anne Marie LaRosa, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR**  
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Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230 [Kevin\\_VanHatten@fws.gov](mailto:Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov)

The Sockeye Salmon returns continue to be strong along the west side of Kodiak Island. As of Wednesday, June 8, 2016, 71,528 Sockeye Salmon have passed the Karluk River weir (escapement goal range 110,000 to 250,000 fish); This is the third highest escapement in the past 10 years. The Ayakulik River passed 19,729 Sockeye Salmon (escapement goal range: 140,000 to 280,000 fish); Litnik "Afognak" River system reported passing 19,642 Sockeye Salmon (escapement goal range: 20,000 to 50,000 fish); Buskin River reported passing 4,067 Sockeye Salmon (escapement goal range: 5,000 to 8,000 fish). In an effort to management the Sockeye Salmon fishery along the west side



of Kodiak, ADF&G continues to have commercial openings for most of the week. Both USFWS and ADF&G have decreased the closed waters for Litnik to subsistence fishing.

The Sockeye Salmon caught for subsistence purposes from Karluk and Larsen Bay are smoking and drying. The commercial fishing on the west side of Kodiak Island has picked up and will possibly extend through the first week of July. The extended commercial openings are the result of good Sockeye Salmon numbers returning to both the Ayakulik and Karluk river systems.

Subsistence restrictions for Chinook Salmon have been set on both the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers. The runs on both these systems are poor, 484 Chinook on the Karluk River and 681 Chinook Salmon on the Ayakulik River, and are not expected to meet their respective escapement goals. Sport fishing for Chinook Salmon is already restricted through the end of the season.

Litnik (Afognak) and Buskin Rivers, as well as in front of Port Lions continue to be common options for Kodiak subsistence users who seek to harvest Sockeye Salmon. Fishing at the mouth of the Buskin River has increased, with up to 12 boats fishing at one time. Sport fishing for Sockeye Salmon on the Buskin is also occurring and by mid-week ADF&G raised the sport bag limit to 5 Sockeye Salmon per day.

The Pasagshak and Saltery River Sockeye Salmon runs are also used by subsistence users, but those runs have not materialized.

***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kodiak Area***

<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs13/kodiak.pdf>

**Bristol Bay and Chignik – Johnathon Gerken Fisheries Branch Chief Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office**

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These areas support abundant returns of salmon, particularly Sockeye Salmon; as well as some of the largest commercial fisheries for salmon in Alaska. All of the assessments of salmon returns are conducted by the State of Alaska, and provide the basis for any inseason assessment. None of the adjustments in commercial fishing management throughout any of these areas are anticipated to affect subsistence fishing in waters under Federal subsistence fisheries jurisdiction, and these subsistence fisheries commence later in June and July. Preseason forecasts for Sockeye Salmon run returns to Bristol Bay, Chignik, and the Alaska Peninsula predict that there will be harvestable surpluses in all districts, and that escapement goals will be achieved in all systems.

Bristol Bay:

There are a number of regulation changes that were adopted or modified at the December 2015 and March 2016 BOF meetings that can be found here:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/650190311.pdf>

For Bristol Bay, the forecast is for 46.6 million Sockeye Salmon, which is lower than the preseason forecast of 54 million for 2015. Most of the sustainable escapement goals (SEG) for Bristol Bay systems were recently revised to increase the upper ranges:

System	SEG
Ugashik	500,000 – 1,400,000
Egegik	800,000 – 2,000,000
Naknek	800,000 – 2,000,000
Wood River	800,000 – 1,800,000
Nushagak	370,000 – 900,000
Igushik	150,000 – 400,000

Harvestable surpluses are projected for all systems. ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division has strategies in place for all mixed stock districts to address differential run strength should that occur. The salmon commercial fishing season opened by regulation on June 1 and weekly fishing schedules are in place until June 17. Conservation measures are in place to conserve Chinook Salmon, including maximum mesh size restriction to 5 ½ inches through July 22 in Naknek/Kvichak, and Ugashik districts. The Chinook Salmon return to Togiak is anticipated to be poor and reduced fishing time from scheduled periods is anticipated. Subsistence fishing in the commercial fishing district is open as of June 1 until further notice. No commercial periods in the Nushagak district have been announced.

Gillnets are the primary gear used for most subsistence fishing for salmon. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon for both the State and Federal subsistence fisheries.

#### Chignik:

The 2016 total Sockeye Salmon *Oncorhynchus nerka* forecasted run for the Chignik River watershed is approximately 2,910,000 fish. Approximately 2,190,000 Sockeye Salmon are expected to be harvested in Chignik Management Area. As of June 10, 2016 three commercial periods have been announced in the Chignik Bay, Central, and Eastern districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District of the Chignik Management Area. These commercial periods occurred on June 4, June 7, and June 10. The commercial catch is estimated at 26,490 Sockeye Salmon, 209 Chinook Salmon, 54 Pink Salmon, and 963 Chum Salmon through June 9. Commercial fishing periods are up to 48 hours in length, separated by at least 48 hours, with subsistence closures 12 hours before and 12 hours after the commercial fishing period. Additional commercial fishing opportunities may occur during June and early July.

All subsequent commercial fishing periods in remaining subsections of the Western District and the first commercial fishing period in the Perryville District may occur on July 6. Fishing periods in the outer portions of these districts will depend on the Chignik River Sockeye Salmon interim escapement objectives being met as well as the strength of the local Pink and Chum salmon runs. Beginning July 6 through August, inner bay fisheries may occur in the Western and Perryville districts to target Pink and Chum salmon. From the end of the transition period (approximately late-June through mid-July) until the end of the fishing season, ADF&G shall manage CMA based on its evaluation of the local Pink *O. gorbuscha*, Chum *O. keta*, and Coho *O. kisutch* salmon runs, as well as the Chignik watershed late-run Sockeye Salmon escapement. Current counts through the Chignik weir are 52,439 sockeye salmon as of June 9.

#### Alaska Peninsula:

There are numerous salmon stocks and fisheries throughout the Alaska Peninsula, as well as the Aleutian Islands. Several Sockeye Salmon escapements (mostly on the north peninsula) are monitored with weirs including Nelson, Bear, Sandy, Ilnik, McLees, and Orzinski rivers. Preseason forecasts are made for only the Nelson (692 thousand) and late-run Bear (424 thousand) river Sockeye Stocks. The largest fisheries are managed under management plans. Management objectives vary by district and time; and include: local Sockeye Salmon escapements; more distant Sockeye Salmon returns to Bristol Bay or Chignik; and local Pink, Chum, or Coho salmon returns.

A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon with a few exceptions. Please check your regulations book or contact your local area manager.

#### ***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Bristol Bay Area***

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf)

#### ***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Chignik Area***

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/chignik.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/chignik.pdf)

### **Southcentral Alaska Web Links**

#### ***Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases***

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

#### ***ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link***

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingSportFishingInfo.R2>

#### ***ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link***

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

#### ***Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southcentral Alaska***

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.Home>

***Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:***  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

**Yukon River – Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.**

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Fred Bue [Fredrick\\_Bue@fws.gov](mailto:Fredrick_Bue@fws.gov)

Emmonak Summer Office (907) 949-1798

The Emmonak Field Office is open for summer management activities. The office can be contacted by calling (907) 949-1798.

**Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies**

The Summer Chum Salmon run is projected to be average to above average and to provide for escapement and subsistence uses. A surplus of 450,000 to 950,000 Summer Chum Salmon is anticipated to be available for commercial harvest, however the commercial harvest opportunity will depend upon available markets and the strength of the overlapping Chinook Salmon run. The Chinook Salmon outlook is projecting a below average run. The run size is projected to be between 130,000 to 175,000 Chinook Salmon with managers anticipating the run near the low end based upon recent productivity; however the 2015 run came in unexpectedly near the upper end this projection, possibly indicating an improvement in productivity. Subsistence conservation measures will be required to spread out the available subsistence harvest and meet escapement goals. No directed Chinook Salmon commercial fishery is anticipated. Public meetings were held throughout the winter and spring to inform fishers of the outlook. Management actions will be based on the pre-season outlook and switch to in-season assessment as managers gain confidence in the assessment information.

**Assessment Information**

Assessment information showed that the early trickle of Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon have entered the river with the runs appearing to be building in strength. In anticipation of an early salmon run, LYTF operations began early starting with the drift gillnet program. The cumulative CPUE for both sites combined through June 11 is 9.46, which is slightly above the historical average of 8.28. Operations at LYTF have been altered from previous years, so caution should be taken when comparing current catch rates to historical catch rates. The 8.25-inch drift gillnet test fishery for Chinook Salmon has been fully operational at the Big Eddy site since May 23. The cumulative CPUE through June 11 is 177.13, which is well above the historical average of 69.64. Chinook Salmon test fishery catches increased June 9, 10, and 11 indicating that the first pulse of Chinook Salmon may be entering the river. The 5.5-inch drift gill net test fisheries for summer chum salmon at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites have been fully operational since May 19 and June 4, respectively. The combined cumulative CPUE for both sites through June 11 is 996.30 which is well above the historical median of 376.88 for this date. The sonar project near Pilot Station began partial operations on May 30 and has been fully operational since June 1. Chinook Salmon passage through June 11 is estimated to be 19,153 fish which is above the historical cumulative average of 13,348

Chinook Salmon for this date. Chinook Salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar increased on June 11, indicating that the group of fish seen in the LYTF on June 9 may be beginning to pass the sonar. Summer Chum Salmon passage through June 11 is estimated to be 111,222 fish which is well above the historical cumulative median of 20,226 Summer Chum Salmon for this date. Information from the LYTF and Pilot Station sonar are in alignment and are performing as expected. At this time it is too early to make Chinook Salmon or Summer Chum Salmon run projections so actions are being based on pre-season projections. Subsistence harvest and fishing reports has been important information for managers when considering early season management actions.

### **Management Actions**

Until assessment data become available, management decisions will be consistent with the preseason projections. At this time, subsistence salmon fishing in the southern portion of the Coastal District is open 24 hours per day seven days per week restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. The northern portion of the Coastal District is closed to subsistence fishing until further notice. Subsistence salmon fishing in Districts 1, 2, and 3 is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week restricted to the use of dipnets and beach seines only to target Summer Chum Salmon. Three, 12-hour, commercial fishing periods were opened in District 1 with dipnets and beach seines targeting Summer Chum Salmon. Subsistence salmon fishing was closed 1-2 hours before, during, and after each period. Five more periods are planned for the week of June 12. Commercial catches, so far, have been low, which was anticipated this early in the season. Subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 4-A was closed to the use of gillnets this week and reopened for 24 hours per day, seven days per week, to dipnets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels to target Summer Chum Salmon. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C with gillnets will close on June 12 for 24 hours and then reopen 24 hours per day, seven days per week to dipnets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels to target Summer Chum Salmon. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B and 5-C with gillnets will close on June 16 for 24 hours and then reopen 24 hours per day, seven days per week to dipnets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels to target Summer Chum Salmon. All Chinook Salmon caught in dipnets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels must be immediately released alive back into the water. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, gillnets that have mesh size 4-inches or smaller not exceeding 60 feet in length may be used to target non-Salmon species. The sequential activation of subsistence fishing restrictions will continue in all districts moving upstream.

### **Consultation**

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed during the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016 to inform and seek input from Yukon River fishermen and stakeholders. Run outlook and possible management strategies were discussed at Federal RAC meetings and State AC meetings, the Yukon River Panel meeting and at the annual Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association Board meeting. In April, a pre-season planning meeting was held in Anchorage that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options.

Assessment and management actions were discussed on the first YRDFA teleconference on June 7.

**Kuskokwim River – Ray Born, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Contact [Vernon\\_Born@fws.gov](mailto:Vernon_Born@fws.gov); (907) 543-3151 or [Lewis\\_Coggins@fws.gov](mailto:Lewis_Coggins@fws.gov)**

**Summary:**

***Opening of Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River to the Harvest of Chinook and Chum Salmon by Federally Qualified Subsistence Users.***

In consultation with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) and the State of Alaska, the Federal In-season Manager has opened Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River main-stem within the refuge boundary, to the harvest of Chinook and Chum Salmon, by Federally qualified subsistence users for 12 hours effective June 12, 2016 from 12:01 p.m. (noon) until 11:59 p.m. (midnight).

Approved gear types will include drift and set gillnets with the following restrictions:

- 6-inch or less mesh;
- May not exceed 45 meshes in depth;
- May not exceed 25 fathoms (150 feet) in length above the Johnson River to the border of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge at Aniak;
- May not exceed 50 fathoms (300 feet) below the Johnson River to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.

This opportunity is based on the need to conserve a lower than average Chinook salmon run. While the Chinook run is expected to be smaller than average, managers feel that it is strong enough to allow a limited opportunity for the first directed harvest for Federally qualified subsistence users. Please report your harvest to your KRITFC commissioner to ensure that salmon harvest needs are met now and in the future.

On June 1, the Federal Subsistence Board closed Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage to the harvest of Chinook and Chum salmon except by Federally qualified subsistence users identified in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Section 804 Subsistence User Prioritization analysis. Federally qualified subsistence users will include residents of the Kuskokwim River drainage and the villages of Chefornak, Kipnuk, Kwigillingok, and Kongiganek.

For species other than Chinook and Chum salmon, subsistence fishing with gillnets is closed in the Kuskokwim River and select tributaries under State regulations, following State Emergency Order 3-S-WR-03-16.

This limited opportunity has been implemented by Federal Emergency Special Action (3-KS-02-16) under the delegated authority of the Federal Subsistence Board.

Fishing effort and harvest data associated with this opening are currently being tabulated by USFWS and the KRITFC to estimate Chinook harvest on June 12.

### ***Closing of Kuskokwim River Tributaries to Gill Nets in Federal public waters***

In consultation with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) and the State of Alaska, the Federal In-season Manager has closed the salmon spawning tributaries of Federal public waters, within the Refuge boundary to gill net fishing. The salmon spawning tributaries include the Eek, Kwethluk, Kasigluk, Kisaralik, Tuluksak, and Aniak rivers and their salmon tributaries. The closure is in effect from June 12, 2016 at 12:01 p.m. (noon) until August 11, 2016 at 11:59 p.m. (noon) unless superseded by another federal special action.

This closure is based on the need to conserve Chinook salmon, which continue to return in low numbers.

On June 1, the Federal Subsistence Board closed Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage to the harvest of Chinook and Chum salmon except by Federally qualified subsistence users identified in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Section 804 Subsistence User Prioritization analysis. Federally qualified subsistence users will include residents of the Kuskokwim River drainage and the villages of Chefnak, Kipnuk, Kwigillingok, and Kongiganek.

Fisheries management below the Refuge boundary at the Kuskokwim River mouth and above the Refuge boundary on the Kuskokwim River at Aniak is under the authority of the State in-season manager. For more information regarding subsistence fishing in these areas, please contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at 907-543-2433.

This restriction has been implemented by Federal Emergency Special Action (3-KS-03-16) under the delegated authority of the Federal Subsistence Board.

Access up-to-date information on fishing opportunities by visiting the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Yukon-Delta-National-Wildlife-Refuge-1039425076133926/>).

### **Test Fisheries:**

As of June 11, the cumulative catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of Chinook salmon at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Bethel Test Fishery is 114. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2015 and 2014 were 104 and 226, respectively. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE at the Aniak Test Fishery on June 11 was 660 as compared to 186 on this date in 2015.

### **Yukon-Kuskokwim-Interior Alaska Web Links**



***Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases:***

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Yukon–Northern Area***

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf)

***NEW = Kuskokwim River Updates Hosted on OSM Website***

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/kuskokwim.cfm>

***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area***

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf)

***ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link:***

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R3>

***ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link:***

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

***Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:***

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R3.home>

***Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:***

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

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**Norton Sound District**

**Sport Fishing:** The Alaska Department of fish and Game (ADF&G) restricted the sport fish bag limit for Chinook salmon in the Unalakleet River and Shaktoolik River drainages by Emergency Order (EO) effective May 9. The bag and annual limit in the Unalakleet River drainage was reduced from two to one fish. The EO set the annual limit at one Chinook salmon in all waters of the Shaktoolik River drainage.

**Subsistence Fishing:** The ADF&G began implementation of subsistence fishing restrictions and closures June 6 with the overall goal of providing limited harvest opportunities while ensuring that adequate numbers of Chinook salmon reach spawning areas in eastern Norton Sound drainages. The ADF&G took these actions since salmon have been entering the coastal waters of Norton Sound and Chinook and chum salmon have been reported being harvested in small numbers in recent days. These fishing periods and restrictions vary for each subdistrict depending upon expected fishing effort and recent harvest patterns, the preferred management option chosen by residents in each community, and expected run abundance of Chinook salmon.

The ADF&G will be evaluating early-season run timing and abundance of Chinook salmon using ground-based escapement indices and fisherman reports from Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts. Inseason assessments of Chinook salmon run abundance may indicate the need for additional conservation measures, or that run abundance warrants a relaxation of subsistence fishing restrictions. The Department will also consider setting fishing periods allowing the use of beach seines to target other salmon species in freshwater areas.

Dip nets and cast nets are now designated legal subsistence gear for salmon throughout Norton Sound. However subsistence fishers in freshwater areas of Subdistricts 5 and 6 are prohibited from retaining any Chinook salmon incidentally captured in dipnets or cast nets. Any Chinook salmon incidentally captured in dipnets or cast nets must be immediately released alive and unharmed back into the water.

#### ***Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6)***

Effective Monday, June 6 at 6:00 p.m., all marine waters and all freshwaters of the Norton Sound Subdistrict were closed to subsistence salmon fishing. The marine waters of the subdistrict from Junction Creek south to Black Point reopened for 48-hours to the use of set gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. At 6 PM Wednesday, June 8 the marine waters of the subdistrict were closed to subsistence salmon fishing until the ADF&G announces the next periods the following week. This opening has been timed so subsistence users can take advantage of good drying weather and favorable surf conditions. This brief period with restricted mesh size and the remainder of the week closed should allow some utilization of Chinook and chum salmon harvest surpluses but not have an adverse impact on escapement of Chinook salmon to the Unalakleet River drainage.

#### ***Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)***

Effective 6 p.m. Monday, June 6, all marine and freshwaters of the Shaktoolik Subdistrict were closed. Monday, June 6 at 6:00 p.m. the marine waters of the subdistrict reopened to subsistence salmon fishing with set gillnets with no mesh size restrictions for 24 hours. After 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 7, the marine waters were closed to subsistence salmon fishing until the following week when additional periods are set. This opening was timed so subsistence users could take advantage of good drying weather and favorable surf conditions. This brief period with remainder of the week closed should allow some utilization of Chinook salmon harvester surplus while not jeopardizing escapement of Chinook salmon to the Shaktoolik River drainage. The Shaktoolik River drainage will remain closed to subsistence salmon fishing until further notice. Gillnets used to target trout and white fish in the Shaktoolik River and all other freshwater areas of the subdistrict must have a mesh size no greater than 4 inches.

#### ***Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)***

On Monday, June 6, at 6:00 p.m. all flowing waters draining the Inglutalik and Ungalik Rivers, and all marine waters of the Norton Bay Subdistrict, were placed on a subsistence gillnet fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week. Periods will be from 6:00 p.m. Mondays to 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays, and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays to 6:00 p.m. Sundays. During the Monday to Wednesday period, subsistence users will be restricted to set gillnets with a stretched measure size of 6 inches or less. For weekend 48-hour openings from Fridays to Sundays, there will be no restrictions on mesh size. This schedule will remain in place until midnight Sunday evening, July 3. The Koyuk River drainage is not affected by this action and will remain open to subsistence fishing with no restrictions in place. Additionally, the use of beach seines, dipnets, and cast nets is open continuously by regulation in all waters of Norton Bay Subdistrict. However, Chinook salmon incidentally captured in these gear types must be immediately released alive and unharmed.

#### ***Other Eastern Norton Sound Coastal Waters***

All water from Wood Point west to Point Romanof are open to subsistence salmon fishing seven days a week. However, all marine waters from the western tip of Cape Denbigh east to Point Dexter and all marine waters from Black Point south to Wood Point, east of Saint Michael remain closed to subsistence salmon fishing through June 30. On July 1, subsistence salmon fishing in these marine waters will revert back to 24 hours a day, seven days a week with no restrictions.

#### ***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for the Kotzebue Area***

<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs11/norton.pdf>